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MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS REVIEW

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MRC National Leadership Conference Scheduled for April 2006

The MRC National Program Office has announced that the 2006 MRC National Leadership Conference will be held April 18-21, 2006 in Dallas, Texas. MRC coordinators, volunteers and others associated with the MRC program are invited to participate in this networking and knowledge-sharing conference. Like the previous ones, this 4th annual conference will provide MRC communities with a great opportunity to share promising practices, ideas and strategies. This year, more time for topic-specific breakout sessions—so popular in years past—have been added. Conference attendees will have the opportunity to attend any sessions that they believe will be the most helpful to their communities. More details about the registration process, agenda and meeting site will be forthcoming from the MRC National Program Office.

If you are interested in sharing the lessons that you have learned working with your MRC unit, please visit the MRC Web site and click on the News and Events box. Information on the conference, including a Call for Presentations link, is featured in the Latest News section. The MRC National Program Office will accept proposals for Concurrent Session presentations of 30-35 minutes in length with 10-15 minutes Q&A (45 minutes total). Presenters may also team up with other MRC

leaders for a panel discussion on a particular topic or come up with other creative ways to highlight subject matter. The MRC Web site has all of the information needed to submit a proposal. The MRC National Program Office plans to regularly update the site with other important information in the time leading up to the conference.

If you have questions about the conference or would like more information, please contact Gary Brown, Regional MRC Coordinator, at (816) 426-2829 or by e-mail at gbrown2@osophs.dhhs.gov. You may also contact the MRC National Program Office at (301) 443-4951 or MRCcontact@osophs.dhhs.gov.

Upcoming Events and Training

Web Conference on Public Health Preparedness for Children. January 11, 2006, Noon-1:30 p.m. CST. Sponsored by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) For more information, visit <http://www.hsrnet.net/ahrq/care4kids>.

Mid-America Alliance Strategic Planning Meeting. January 17-18, 2006 in Denver, CO. For more information on the Mid-America Alliance, visit www.midamericaalliance.org.

Office of Public Health and Science, Department of Health and Human Services, Region VII
601 E. 12th Street, Room S1801, Kansas City, MO 64106 (816) 426-2829 (816) 426-2178 Fax

Topics in Public Health Preparedness Workshops.

January 19-20, 2006 in Costa Mesa, CA. Sponsored by the UCLA Center for Public Health and Disasters. Four workshops in the Public Health Preparedness Series:

- Conducting a Hazard Risk Assessment
- Risk Communication
- Writing Incident Action Plans
- Keeping Your Workforce

For more information, visit <http://www.cphd.ucla.edu/>.

27th Annual International Disaster Management Conference.

February 9-12, 2006 in Orlando, FL. Sponsored by the Emergency Medicine Learning and Resource Center. For more information, visit the conference website at <http://www.emlrc.org/disaster2006.htm>.

2006 Local, State and Federal Public Health Preparedness Summit.

February 21-24, 2006 in Washington, D.C. Sponsored by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). For more information, visit the conference website at <http://www.naccho.org/phprep06/>.

2006 MRC National Leadership Conference. April 18-21, 2006 in Dallas, TX. Sponsored by the MRC National Program Office. For more information, visit www.medicalreservecorps.gov.

MRC Link Added to Kansas Volunteer Commission Web Site

Thanks to the efforts of Karen Whitlow, Mid-America MRC Coordinator, the Kansas Volunteer Commission has agreed to add a link to the national MRC Web site on their Web site. Hopefully this link will help generate volunteers for MRC units in Kansas! The link can be accessed at the following address:

http://www.kanserve.org/volunteer_opportunities/volunteer_opportunities.htm

MRC Coordinators Serve on National Working Groups

Several Region VII MRC coordinators have recently been appointed to serve on national working groups to help develop policies and procedures related to a wide range of issues affecting MRC volunteers. Vickie Stevens, United Way of the Midlands/Nebraska and Western Iowa MRC, has been appointed to serve on the

Mass Casualty Working Group. The purpose of this working group is to help guide the MRC National Program Office's efforts to meet the "charge" from the White House Homeland Security Council that "HHS will establish systems to pre-enroll, credential, train and deploy MRC personnel who are willing to provide emergency health and medical services after a catastrophic event. HHS will determine the mechanism(s) necessary to hire MRC personnel where necessary and appropriate, and create a framework within the Public Health Service to organize, train, and equip these personnel to respond to a mass casualty event."

Following the 2005 MRC National Leadership Conference, Susan Hoskins was appointed to serve on the MRC Training and Core Competencies Working Group. This working group has developed a draft set of core competencies for MRC volunteers (these will not be required for MRC volunteers, only recommended). Two reviewers from each region—an MRC leader/coordinator and an MRC "associate" (i.e., a volunteer, someone from a partnering agency, state or regional official, etc.) have been appointed to review and evaluate the draft core competencies, and to identify any gaps. Ellen Bayhille-Hunter, Sedgwick County, KS MRC Coordinator, has been appointed to serve as a reviewer for this project in the "coordinator" category and Susan Hard, Public Health Manager with the Mid-America Regional Council, has been appointed as a reviewer in the "associate" category.

For more information on MRC working groups, please contact Gary Brown, Regional MRC Coordinator, at (816) 426-2829 or gbrown2@osophs.dhhs.gov.

Federal Government Begins Pandemic Influenza Planning with States

On December 5, 2005, Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt convened a meeting with senior state and local officials from across the nation to establish an integrated and coordinated planning process between federal, state and local governments for a response to an influenza pandemic. As part of this planning process, Secretary Leavitt asked state officials to convene state summits on the issue, hosted by the governors of each state. These summits will be held over the next several months, beginning with

Minnesota's summit, which was held on December 14, 2005. According to Secretary Leavitt, "Pandemic planning needs to go beyond public health. Discussion at the state and local level needs to address how schools, businesses, public agencies and others participate in pandemic preparedness."

At this meeting, HHS advised states to establish a *Pandemic Influenza Coordinating Committee* to develop and adopt a plan that will:

- Delineate the roles and responsibilities of state and local agencies
- Build on existing preparedness and response plans for bioterrorism events, SARS and other infectious disease emergencies
- Address legal issues, including those that affect hospital staffing, patient care and quarantine
- Be periodically reviewed and updated

In conjunction with this meeting, Secretary Leavitt introduced a *State and Local Health Department Planning Checklist for Public Health Roles and Responsibilities*. This checklist summarizes key planning activities to be undertaken by the public health, medical and emergency management systems of each state. The checklist is not intended to establish mandatory requirements. Each jurisdiction needs to determine whether it is adequately prepared for disease outbreaks in accordance with its own laws and procedures. According to Secretary Leavitt, "Pandemic readiness is a fundamental obligation of state and local governments, as well as the national government." He also stated, "In starting this national conversation and providing useful tools, the Bush Administration is supporting work on the local level that will enhance preparedness both within and beyond our borders."

The details of this effort, the *State and Local Health Department Planning Checklist for Public Health Roles and Responsibilities*, the National Strategy, HHS Pandemic Influenza Plan and more information can be found online at www.pandemicflu.gov. Pandemic influenza planning will also be a topic addressed at the MRC National Leadership Conference on April 18-21, 2006 in Dallas, Texas.

Updating Unit Profiles on the MRC Website

As a registered Medical Reserve Corps director and/or coordinator, you have permission to change the contact information for your unit on the MRC website. To make adjustments to your unit's contact information, log-on to

the MRC website (www.medicalreservecorps.gov) using the username and password you created at registration. Once logged in, you will be given the option in the left-hand frame of the website to "Edit MRC Unit." Click on this tab. The next page will include the fields for your MRC unit, which you have the ability to maintain and keep accurate. These fields include:

- ☐ Unit name
- ☐ Jurisdiction
- ☐ Sponsoring organization
- ☐ Point of contact's name
- ☐ Unit address
- ☐ Phone number
- ☐ E-mail address
- ☐ Website address
- ☐ Activation plan
- ☐ Emergency 24/7 contact information
- ☐ Brief unit description
- ☐ Current activities

You may change or update your unit information as often as you like. However, the MRC national program office requests that you update this information at least once every three months. It is important to update your unit profile on a regular basis. Your unit profile may be one of the first places a potential MRC volunteers goes to find information about joining your unit. If your unit profile does not contain any information, or if it contains old information, the individual may lose interest in becoming a part of your unit, and you may have lost a potential volunteer. In addition, current unit contact information is very important during emergencies, when local officials or the MRC national program office may need to contact you quickly.

After making any corrections, simply click the "Submit" button at the bottom of the page. This will save your updates and post them to the MRC website for all to reference. Please keep in mind that only the MRC national program office staff and you are able to see the emergency contact and activation process information. This information will not be shared with other users of the MRC website.

If you have any technical issues with this feature, please e-mail the Webmaster at MRCWebmaster@z-techcorp.com. For all other questions, feel free to contact the MRC national program office at (301) 443-4951 or MRCcontact@osophs.dhhs.gov.

Thank you very much for ensuring your unit profile is current and reflects your activities and contributions to your communities!